



RIPPING YARNS

Zygoté would like to offer some advice to those of you who book overseas hotels online: book direct. Avoid using a web-based agency unless you are sure it uses a secure connection, indicated by a padlock image on your browser, and the prefix https:// in the address bar. Zygoté has a growing list of UK-based agents that email personal information to lists of hotels, including credit card details, via systems such as Outlook and Mozilla. Anyone with a packet sniffer and criminal intent can tap into an insecure server, get your credit card data and take you to the cleaners.

If you want to scare yourself even further, buy a universal card reader for around £35, plug it into your USB port and run through some of those smartcards that hotels use instead of room keys. This is particularly entertaining if you have visited an all-inclusive resort, where you can run up a tab for entertainment, food and drink using the same card. You should be able to dump the output directly into an open document under Word or Excel, and retrieve your name, street address, credit card number, full buying habits and, for exotic destinations, your passport number. If you have ever chucked your key card in the hotel bin or handed it in at the desk when you check out, you risk being ripped off. In the words of Little Richard, rip it up!

PLAY TIME

The Department of Education and Skills has spent more money commissioning yet another report confirming the blindingly obvious. This time, they have sent their researchers all over England to interview pupils aged 11, 14 and 16 years old. The report reveals that

ZYGOTE

Wily wordsmith Zygoté goes against type as he asks: what is the nation's favourite font? How many employers actually like abbreviations in CVs? And who in their right mind sends emails with pink text?

girls spend most of their computer time doing positive things such as homework, whereas boys spend most of their computer time doing negative things such as playing violent games. A whopping 70 per cent of boys say they use dedicated games consoles every day, while only 32 per cent of girls admit to using them weekly. Everyone knows that girls get higher GCSE grades than boys, but now it has been confirmed that the more time children spend playing computer games, the lower GCSE grades they get.

Who'd have thought it? How about anyone who's ever spent five minutes in a school playground? The solution to the problem of academic gender inequality is equally obvious. Girls must be forced to play violent computer games.

BROADLY SPEAKING

The march of super-fast broadband began in September. It will revolutionise communications and entertainment, and there's no stopping it. Londoners who joined as pilot users in the summer are paying £20 per month for the 24Mbit/s service, but the rest of us can sign up

for £25 or less as it rolls out to cover 60 per cent of the population.

Rapid downloading of films is made possible by 24Mbit/s. Maybe this time the Hollywood moguls won't make the same mistake music companies made when audio file-swapping swept the planet. But it looks like they are already adopting exactly the same myopic attitudes of trying to fight the medium as opposed to embracing it.

Six major Hollywood studios have pooled \$30 million (around £17 million) and set up MovieLabs Inc, with a mission to foil movie pirates. They want to develop systems to jam video camera recorders in movie theatres. Zygoté can save them the trouble by reminding them that a \$1,000 bribe to the projectionist will ensure any such protection is turned off. Besides, most high-quality pirate movies are not copied in public cinemas but off originals leaked by their own employees.

The other area MovieLabs Inc is targeting is the detection and blocking of video file transfers on business networks. Zygoté believes such blanket activity is highly illegal without a specific warrant. The

most worrying area of the industry's research budget is in developing ways of monitoring university networks for evidence of illegal movie downloads. To do that, it will need to keep tabs on all file traffic, and that's called a Police State.

No sir, Hollywood had better wise up fast, and jump on the bandwagon as opposed to trying to halt its progress. Otherwise, Zygoté predicts that independent-minded producers and directors will use high-speed connections to sell their movies direct to the consumer, without a Hollywood studio and cinema chain in sight. Actors already seem to be way ahead of them; Hollywood star Morgan Freeman has already set up a download and burn service called ClickStar. If you have shares in Blockbuster, sell them now.

CAPS OFF

A national study of email habits cites Arial 12-point black as our most popular font, which is reassuring. It also reveals that five per cent of us email pink or purple messages, which is disturbing. Eighty-one per cent of managers will not call a candidate for interview if they don't like the font or colour used on an applicant's CV, and anyone using unnecessary CAPS, abrvtns or exclamation marks is automatically rejected too!!!

Zygoté wishes to add to this list of unacceptable email behaviour. Anyone who forwards a joke with American spellings and a doctored Photoshop image shall receive one stroke of the lash for every time you have already received the same email. People who cc emails to their entire address book shall first be shown how the bcc button works, then have their own email address advertised on the back of buses. Finally, people who leave a blank subject box should

Great Moments in Computing
© 1988-2005 Mel Croucher and Robin Grenville-Evans
215: THE GRAPHICS TABLET



Early graphics tablets were hampered by basic resolution and crude displays.



In the 1980s, pre-set graphics routines became available for exploitation, such as rotation and resizing.



In the 21st Century, the graphics tablet has become an indispensable tool for retouch artists.